

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9933

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 00717

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FOR NEA/EX

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AFSP, IR

SUBJECT: OPENING OF CONSULATES AT SHIRAZ AND ISFAHAN

1. WE UNDERSTAND INFORMALLY THAT OUR HOPES FOR EARLY ACTION ON OPENING CONSULATES AT SHIRAZ AND ISFAHAN HAVE BEEN DELAYED EVEN FURTHER BY AN OMB DECISION THAT IT WILL NOT ENTERTAIN THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR THE NECESSARY FUNDING. IF THIS INFORMATION IS ACCURATE, I FIND IT DISTRESSING, TO SAY THE LEAST, SINCE I WOULD ASSUME THE DEPARTMENT IS MUCH BETTER PLACED THAN OMB TO EVALUATE OUR FOREIGN SERVICE NEEDS AND, ACCORDINGLY, THAT IT WOULD NOT ACCEPT OMB JUDGMENTS IN THESE MATTERS.

2. AS THE BUREAU, IF NO ONE ELSE, IS WELL AWARE, THIS MATTER HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE CORRESPONDENCE IN WHICH THE NEED FOR THESE TWO POSTS HAS BEEN DELINEATED AND JUSTIFIED IN GREAT DETAIL. THE DEPARTMENT'S AGREEMENT THAT THESE TWO POSTS ARE INDEED NEEDED WAS REACHED MANY MONTHS AGO.

3. THIS NEED WAS PREMISED ON THE RAPIDLY GROWING PRESENCE OF AMERICAN MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN THE TWO AREAS OF IRAN IN WHICH THE COUNTRY'S PRESENT AND FUTURE ECONOMIC, CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENT PROMISES TO BE OF MAJOR

US INTEREST. IF ANYTHING, OUR ORIGINAL ESTIMATE AS TO THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS AND THE RANGE AND VARIETY OF OUR INTERESTS IN THESE TWO AREAS HAS PROVEN TO BE GREATLY UNDERSTATED. OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN ISFAHAN MAY REACH 6,000 AND OVER 2,000 ARE EXPECTED TO BE LIVING AND WORKING IN SHIRAZ. ADDITIONALLY, VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS ARE EXPECTED TO BE PRESENT IN THE SHIRAZ CONSULAR DISTRICT WORKING ON SEVERAL MASSIVE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS ALONG IRAN'S SOUTHERN BORDER. THE PROBLEMS OF PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF THESE LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF CITIZENS AS WELL AS THE NEED TO KEEP TRACK OF OUR GROWING COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND LOCAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN THESE TWO INCREASINGLY POWERFUL CENTERS SEEMS SELF-EVIDENT.

4. GIVEN THE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION AND THE INCREASINGLY URGENT NEED, IT IS HOPED IT IS PREPARED TO TAKE FORCEFUL ACTION TO JAR THE NECESSARY FUNDS LOOSE TO OPEN THESE TWO POSTS. COSTS ARE ACCELERATING EVERY DAY (REF TEHRAN 10585 AND UNDOUBTEDLY WILL GET WORSE. OBVIOUSLY, THE LONGER WE WAIT THE MORE EXPENSIVE AND DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO OBTAIN SUITABLE FACILITIES IN THESE ALREADY OVERCROWDED URBAN CENTERS.

5. IN ADDITION, THE CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY WITH REGARD TO THE TIMING OF THEIR OPENING HAS GENERATED AWKWARD STAFFING SITUATIONS WHICH COULD DEGENERATE INTO SERIOUS MORALE PROBLEMS IF FURTHER DELAYS ARE ENCOUNTERED. WE HOPE RENEWED DEPARTMENTAL EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE NEEDED FUNDS WILL ALLEVIATE THIS PROBLEM AS WELL AS THE OTHERS DESCRIBED ABOVE.
MIKLOS

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